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WHITCHURCH URBAN DISTRICT

REPORT

- of the -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

- for the year -

1937.



WHITCHURCH URBAN DISTRICT.

R E P O R T of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1937.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY.

Medical Officer of Health. M. GEPP. D.P.H. (S.W. Salop Combined Districts).

Sanitary Inspector. M. W. Sowden. Also holds office as Surveyor and Water Works Engineer.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in acres). 5,996.

Registrar-General's estimate of resident population mid 1937. 6,310

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1937) according to Rate Books. 1,854

Rateable Value. £35,321. Sum represented by a penny rate. £139.

Social Conditions. The District comprises the town of Whitchurch, with modern extensions radiating from the old and compact centre, and a considerable area of agricultural and dairy land. Whitchurch is a market and residential town and a centre and market of a large cheese making industry. There are an engineering works, a steam laundry and a creamery. Modern extensions consist largely of good class and well spaced artisan dwellings, while in the old centre there remain some streets and yards where the houses are often below a good standard, and occupied at low rents by a class of small wage earners. Improvement is proceeding by closing or demolition of the worst of these, and the Council has built, and owns, house property amounting to 14 per cent of the inhabited houses.

Under the Salop Review Order, a considerable area of agricultural land was added to the District, with 14 farm houses and 23 dwelling houses. The added area is 1213 acres.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

	<u>Total.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>		
Live Births	(Legitimate 87	42	45	) Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.	16.0
	(Illegitimate 14	9	5		
Stillbirths	3	2	1	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.	29.
Deaths	104	49	55	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.	16.5

Deaths from puerperal causes: Deaths. Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

No. 29. Puerperal sepsis	nil	-
No. 30. Other puerperal causes	nil	-
Total	nil	-

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-	<u>Number.</u>	<u>Rate.</u>
All infants per 1,000 live births ..	5	50
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ..	5	57
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ..	-	-



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Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	8.
" " Measles (all ages)	nil.
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	nil.
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	nil.

Whitchurch U.D. England & Wales.

Birth rate per 1,000 of population	16.0	14.9
Death rate " " " " { Crude	16.5	
{ Corrected	14.3	12.4
Infant death rate per 1,000 born	50.	58.

Population. This is estimated, by the Registrar General, as 6,310 for 1937, or 90 persons more than in 1936, and 55 more than at the Census of 1931.

The birth rate was higher than in the preceding year and above that of the Country generally.

Birth rate in the	{ 1937	..	16.0
District per 1,000	{ 1936	..	14.3
population	{ Average of 5 years 1931-35	..	14.5
	{ " " 10 " 1921-30	..	16.4

Of the total 104 (live and still) births 14, or 13 per cent, were illegitimate.

			<u>Crude.</u>	<u>Corrected.</u>
Death rate in the	{ 1937	..	16.5	14.3
District per 1,000	{ 1936	..	14.1	12.3
population	{ Average of 5 years 1931-35	..	12.2	10.6
	{ " " 10 years 1921-30	..	13.9	-

The death rate for the year, it will be seen, was sensibly above the average.

The rise in the rate over the previous year can be explained by the increase in deaths from influenza, viz: 17 in 1937, and 4 in 1936. This fact alone would account for an increased death rate of 2 per 1,000 population.

In many respects the year's figures were favourable, there being no death from any of the common infectious diseases, and one only from tuberculous disease. Cancer caused 8 deaths, against 7 in 1936; heart disease 26, against 23 in 1936; acute and chronic nephritis 3, against 8 in 1936; cerebral haemorrhage 4, against 8 in 1936. Four deaths were due to bronchitis, and 1 to pneumonia. One death was suicidal, and 4 were due to accident, against 2 in 1936.

Infant death rate. The rate for the year was below that of the Country generally. Though small variations occur from year to year, the District's average rate has maintained a comparatively favourable level for the past twenty years. Of the 5 infant deaths, 4 were due to conditions classed as Congenital debility.

Infant death rate	{ 1937	..	50.
in the District	{ 1936	..	56.
per 1,000 born	{ Average of 5 years 1931-35	..	47.
	{ " " 10 " 1921-30	..	46.

The reduction in the infant death rate, since 1914, coincides with the establishment of the Maternity and Child Welfare in the town by a Voluntary Association, which has done continued excellent work as one of the County Welfare Centres, supervised and provided with medical and health visitor service by the County Council. The comparative rates are:- 1901-06, 103; 1907-14, 104; 1915-19, 82; 1921-30, 46.

HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

As regards the following services, no change has occurred during the year in the arrangements detailed in my Annual Report for 1930:-

Nursing in the Home, Laboratory Facilities, Legislation in force, Hospitals, Ambulance Facilities, Clinics and Treatment Centres.

The attendances for the year at the Whitchurch Child Welfare Centre were:-

	<u>New Cases.</u>	<u>Total cases.</u>	<u>Total attendances.</u>
Under 1 year ..	97	133	1205
1 to 5 years ..	35	185	1375
Expectant Mothers ..	41	50	129

A Tuberculosis examination centre is open here once a month.

Hospital Isolation. In the absence of any material progress in the scheme for provision of a County Isolation Hospital, the District Council continues its arrangement for the admission of urgent cases to the Shrewsbury and Atcham Joint Isolation Hospital, by payment.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply. The Surveyor reports:-

"The total water consumption for the year was 72,010,250 gallons, being an increase of 4,073,250 gallons over 1936, with an average consumption of 197,288 gallons per day.

"There has been no shortage of water experienced during the year, nor has there been any observed failure of supplies.

"A further extension of the Council's water main in Dodington (Fletcher's Estate) has been made for a length of approximately 140 yards.

"A new modern chlorinating apparatus has been installed at the Fenns Bank Pumping Station which appears to be working satisfactorily.

Rainfall. The rainfall for the year as recorded at Fenns Bank was 26.73 inches, as compared with 25.51 inches in 1936. The average yearly rainfall, over a period of the last 25 years amounts to 28.87 inches."

Following upon my remarks and recommendations in the preceding Annual Report, investigation was continued into the character of many of the numerous sources of water supply gathered together at the Council's Water Works at Fenn's Bank, and also into the condition of the treated water delivered to the town. A large number of bacteriological analyses, and some chemical analyses, were made, and the results showed a varying degree of bacterial condition of some of the sources, and also a variation in bacterial content of the treated water. It became clear that the old chlorinating plant, one of a very early type, but which had given generally good service for the greater part of thirteen years, together with the existing arrangements for addition and mixing of the Chlorine, was not to be depended upon for unvarying efficiency.

By the Council's direction an inspection was made in September by the M.O.H., with the Surveyor, and Drs. Provan and Wilson, of Harper Adams College, who had conducted the bacteriological and chemical investigations during the year. We had also the assistance of an expert in the management of chlorinators. After full consideration, a strong recommendation was presented to the Council for the installation of a new plant, and for remodelling the system of application so as to ensure treatment of the fully mixed and softened water from all the sources.

This recommendation was adopted by the Council. Tenders were called for and a new 'Wallace & Tiernan' plant was installed and put in action on December 10th. Bacteriological tests, now being made monthly, have shown it to be working with efficiency. The present dosage is 0.707 parts per million of chlorine, and daily observation with the 'chloroscope' has shown residual chlorine of 0.15 p.p. million at the Waterworks, and 0.10 p.p. million in water delivered in the town. This is, in my opinion, entirely satisfactory, and the Council is to be congratulated on having made adequate scientific provision for a good and safe water supply.

Drainage and Sewerage. No new work in sewerage was required. Fifty-three new houses were properly connected to the sewers, and a few old drains amended in construction.

Streams and Watercourses. The Surveyor's report states:-

"Stream Pollution. Nuisances have been caused by the "pollution of the watercourses in Black Park and Deermoss, but "these were abated immediately upon preliminary notices being "served upon the owners.

"Watercourses. Three Preliminary Notices have been "served during the year requiring certain watercourses situated "at various points in the District to be cleared out. The "requirements in each case have been carried out satisfactorily.

"Closet Accommodation.

"No. of W.C's in District ..	1834
"No. of privies outside sewered area ..	170
"No. of privies demolished ..	6
"No. of new W.C's erected ..	62
"No. of old privies now left in the sewered area ..	5

"Scavenging. The collection of house refuse has been "satisfactorily carried out during the year and deposited at "the Council's two tips. Disposal is by 'controlled tipping.'

"The Council have also purchased a new motor refuse "collection vehicle with a hydraulic tipper and sliding metal "shutters to replace the two horse drawn carts used previously "for house refuse collection."

The following is an Account furnished by the Sanitary Inspector, of Sanitary Work for the year.

Number of houses which have been inspected during the above period, either in connection with outbreaks of infectious disease, or in consequence of complaints, or in the course of a systematic Sanitary Survey ..	1598
Number of legal notices sent ..	nil
Number of informal notices sent ..	57
Number of such notices complied with ..	41
Number of letters written ..	5

PARTICULARS OF SANITARY MATTERS REFERRED TO IN THE ABOVE NOTICES:

(a) Houses to be cleansed after infectious disease ..	nil
(b) Deficient or objectionable water supply ..	38
(c) New drains to be constructed or old drains to be amended ..	4
(d) New closets to be provided or old ones to be amended in construction ..	12
(e) Houses damp or dirty, or admitting rain, or weather, or otherwise in a bad sanitary condition ..	24
(f) Offensive accumulations of all kinds ..	4
(g) Animals so kept as to be a nuisance ..	nil
(h) Houses overcrowded ..	nil

Houses disinfected after infectious disease (other than phthisis)	6
Houses disinfected in cases of phthisis ..	nil
Privies converted to water closets ..	6
Privies converted to earth closets ..	nil
Plans for new houses passed ..	30
Houses connected to public water supply ..	55
Private wells reconstructed or improved ..	nil
Houses connected to public sewerage ..	53
Lengths of new sewers laid ..	nil
Lengths of new water mains laid ..	140 yards.

Proceedings before Magistrates: Nil.

M. W. SOWDEN.
Sanitary Inspector.

Shops. Periodical inspection is made of all the shops within the Urban District, by the Sanitary Inspector, as to conditions of ventilation and temperature and proper sanitary conveniences. No action was found necessary.

Smoke Abatement. No serious defects were reported or found.

Swimming Baths. The question of enlarging the Council's Public Swimming Bath, and of improving cleansing of the water, has been under consideration for some time. Progress can now be reported. The Surveyor states:-

"Public Baths. The Council have recommended that plans, estimate specifications, etc., be prepared for a proposed extension of the existing Swimming Bath, for submission to the Ministry of Health, for a loan sanction.

"No bacteriological examination of the water has been made during the year.

"Regular chlorination of the water is carried out by adding about $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of Chloros into the water twice weekly."

Eradication of bed bugs.

(1) The number of (a) Council houses (i) found to be infested: nil
(ii) disinfested: nil

(b) other houses (i) found to be infested: 4
(ii) disinfested: 4

(2) The methods employed for freeing infested houses from bed bugs; Stoving.

(3) The methods employed for ensuring that the belongings of tenants are free from vermin before removal to Council houses; Inspection and disinfection where necessary.

(4) Whether the work of disinfestation is carried out by the Local Authority or by a contractor. No radical methods of disinfestation for bed bugs, such as cyanide gas, have so far been found necessary.

Schools. The schools have been frequently visited and found to be in a clean and sanitary condition.

Lodging Houses. The two registered lodging houses in the town have been frequently inspected and have been well conducted and kept clean and well ventilated.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year:-

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ..	1230
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..	2454
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ..	165
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..	206
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ..	36
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ..	15

2. Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices:-

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ..	15
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:-

(a) Proceedings under sections 9, 10, and 16, of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ..	nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:-	
(a) By owners ..	nil
(b) By Local authority in default of owners ..	nil
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ..	nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-	
(a) By owners ..	nil
(b) By Local authority in default of owners ..	nil
(c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ..	34
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ..	11
(d) Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ..	nil
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ..	nil

Housing Act 1936 - Part IV - Overcrowding:-

(a) (i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	<table> <tr> <td>Ordinary houses</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr> <td>Council houses</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>13</td></tr> </table>	Ordinary houses	11	Council houses	2	Total	13
Ordinary houses	11						
Council houses	2						
Total	13						
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein ..	13						
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	<table> <tr> <td>Ordinary houses</td><td>82</td></tr> <tr> <td>Council houses</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>102</td></tr> </table>	Ordinary houses	82	Council houses	20	Total	102
Ordinary houses	82						
Council houses	20						
Total	102						

(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	Ordinary houses	1
		Council houses	1
		Total	2
(c)	(i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	..	21
	(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	..	153
(d)	Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding		.. nil

The 21 cases of overcrowding relieved during the year have been abated as follows:-

By removal into Council houses	..	7
By removal into other larger houses	..	6
By reduction in the number in family	..	7
By extensions to house	..	1
		<u>21</u>

The above figures, supplied by the Surveyor, show that the Council has been active in dealing with its overcrowding problem.

As regards the other problem of Slum Clearance progress has also been active, as shown by the following paragraphs from the Surveyor's report:-

"Housing Acts 1925-36. Slum Clearance. The persons occupying the 34 houses contained in the eight clearance areas, for which Clearance Orders had been confirmed by the Ministry of Health during the latter part of 1936, were removed during May and June in the new three and four bedroomed houses erected on the Egerton Road site, for which a loan Sanction had been received from the Ministry of Health.

"The occupants from one declared individual unfit house were also rehoused on the above scheme during the year, an undertaking having been given by the owner of the house not to relet on condition that accommodation was found for the displaced family."

(3) The number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to (a) the service of notices requiring the execution of works or (b) the making of demolition or closing orders;

{a}	..	nil
{b}	..	nil

(7) The number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted under subsection (2) of Section 19 of the Housing Act, 1930; .. nil

New houses. Fifty-five houses were built during the year, 35 by the Council, and 20 by private enterprise. As previously noted, the Council now has built 265 houses and owns rather more than 14 per cent of the total number of houses.

Housing (Rural Workers) Act 1926. No action was taken during the year, and the total number of houses reconditioned under the Act remains at the low figure of 2.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops for the Year.

Number of Cowkeepers and Milksellers on Register	Wholesalers	63
	Retailers	12
	Total	75

Number of premises - cowsheds	..	..	108
dairies	..	..	52
milkshops	..	..	5
Total number of premises registered	..	..	165
Number of inspections	..	..	217

Defects found (1) in cowsheds:

(a) floor or cubic space	..	-
(b) ventilation	..	-
(c) lighting	..	-
(d) structure of floor	..	-
(e) drainage	..	-
(f) cleanliness	..	7

(2) in surroundings of cowsheds	..	-
(3) in sanitary condition of drains	..	-
(4) in sanitary condition of milkshops	..	-
(5) in water supply	..	-

Number of notices - verbal and written	..	7
Number of these notices complied with	..	7
Number of defects found and not yet remedied	..	-
Number of premises reconstructed or radically improved during the year	..	2

Number of Tuberculin Tested (Certified) milk sellers in District						
			at end of year			1
"	" Tuberculin Tested	"	"	"	"	1
"	" Pasteurised	"	"	"	"	nil
"	" Accredited	"	"	"	"	15

M. W. SOWDEN.

Sanitary Inspector.

Meat and Other Foods. The Inspector reports:-

"Slaughter-houses. There are 6 licensed, and one registered, slaughter houses in the District, including one for calves and one for pigs only. These have been regularly inspected and found to be kept in a clean and sanitary condition. The humane killer is used in all slaughter houses, and no carcasses or parts were found to be tuberculous or otherwise unfit for consumption.

"One of the above slaughter houses included under licensed premises situated within the built-up area has been closed during the year.

"There are 17 licensed Slaughtermen in the District."

"Carcases Inspected and Condemned."

	Cattle, ex- cluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
"Number killed (approx) ..	936	-	130	3484	2288
"Number inspected ..	295	-	52	1180	654
"All diseases except Tuberculosis. Whole carcasses condemned	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned ..	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	-	-	-	-	-
"Tuberculosis only. "Whole carcasses condemned	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
"Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
"Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis ..	-	-	-	-	-

"Bakehouses. The eleven registered bakehouses have been frequently inspected and found to be in a good and clean sanitary condition. One new bakehouse has been constructed during the year which complies with the necessary requirements.

"Other places where food is prepared. These are regularly inspected and are kept in a good and clean sanitary condition."

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Diphtheria antitoxin is supplied by the District Council, free of cost to cases of the poorer class, through the Surveyor who holds a stock and supplies medical men upon request. Antitoxin is in general use in all but very slight cases. In accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health's Memorandum of July, 1922, the Surveyor was authorised to hold and supply antitoxin in phials of 8,000 units for treatment, and of 500 units for protective purposes.

Disinfection of infected rooms and articles is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector by means of formalin spray or vapor lamps.

Diphtheria Immunisation. The Council in 1936, upon my recommendation and with the sanction of the Ministry of Health, adopted a scheme whereby parents of the poorer classes are enabled to obtain protection of their children against diphtheria infection by a process of active immunisation.

So far, no requests have been made by parents for free inoculation.

As the District is one in which diphtheria is liable to recur at intervals it is much to be desired that free use of this protection be made by parents, especially in the intervals between the occurrence of outbreaks.

I would suggest that the matter might be given some useful publicity by the exhibition, if feasible, of suitable posters in the Child Welfare Centre in the town.

The incidence of infectious disease during the year was again very light; two cases of Diphtheria, and two of Scarlet Fever, only, coming to notice, and one of the Scarlet fever cases appeared to be an imported case. Two children in one of the Elementary Schools were found, by swabbing, to be diphtheria 'Carriers' and were excluded until cleared of infection. Precautions were taken in every case, and there was no spread of infection.

Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

Disease	Total cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small-pox	-	-	-
Scarlet fever	2	-	-
Diphtheria	2	-	-
Enteric fever (including Paratyphoid)	-	-	-
Puerperal fever	-	-	-
Puerperal pyrexia	-	-	-
Pneumonia	2	-	1
Erysipelas	1	-	-

Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Cases			Vision un-impaired	Vision im-paired	Total Blindness	Deaths
	Notified	Treated					
		At home	In Hospital				
1	-	1	1	-	-	-	

Tuberculosis.

Age-Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1- -	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
5- -	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
15- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25- -	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
35- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55- -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 and upwards	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	-	1	2	-	1	-	-

The one death was of a notified case.

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925. No action was taken or found necessary, as to tuberculous employees in the milk trade.

Public Health Act, 1925, Section 62. No action was necessary for application for an order for compulsory removal to hospital.

M. GEPP.

Medical Officer of Health.

Shrewsbury.
25th May, 1938.

